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SUBJECT: DISCUSSION OF CAFTA-DR BY PRESIDENTS BUSH AND
PACHECO AT SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS

1. Summary: On November 5, 2005, all of the major Costa Rican dailies ran stories based on comments made by President Pacheco and Foreign Trade Minister Gonzalez about the meeting with President Bush the day before on the United States-Central American-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR). The general themes of the reported comments made by President Pacheco and Minister Gonzalez were that President Bush showed great respect for Costa Rica's democratic processes and the U.S. was not pressuring Costa Rica to hasten CAFTA-DR ratification. President Pacheco's readout emphasizing "respect" made for a very positive pro-Costa Rica spin to the reports of the meeting. End Summary.

2. President Pacheco commented about his meeting with President Bush in a press conference in which the leaders of the Central American countries took part on November 4, 2005. The press reported that the meeting with President Pacheco was President Bush's first event of the day that later included the official opening ceremony of the Summit of the Americas. Much attention was given to the fact that President Pacheco sat next to President Bush during the opening of the Summit in Mar del Plata, Argentina.

3. President Pacheco and Minister Gonzalez were reported as saying that President Bush is paying special attention to Costa Rica with respect to CAFTA-DR. President Pacheco said that he explained that Costa Rica is a country that goes at its own pace, that has its own way of doing things, and that is something that should be respected. Minister Gonzalez said that President Bush repeated several times to "take your time" and "you are doing all right" with respect to how Costa Rica was proceeding on CAFTA-DR. (Note: Both phrases were quoted in both Spanish and English in the articles. End Note.) The officials said that President Bush expressed confidence that Costa Rica would eventually be part of the free trade agreement. The reports added that President Bush at no time pressured Costa Rica to hasten the approval process and was very respectful of the Costa Rican democratic process.

LANGDALE